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Imagery analysis report

**Mobile Missile-Related Activity at Plesetsk
Missile/Space Test Center SSM, USSR (S)**

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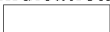



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MOBILE MISSILE-RELATED ACTIVITY AT PLESETSK MISSILE/SPACE TEST CENTER SSM, USSR (S)

1. (TSR) The observation of troop formations, construction of SS-16/-20 vehicle mockups, the presence of two large canvas-covered structures, and recent construction indicated that Plesetsk Mobile ICBM Facilities 1  and 2  at Plesetsk Missile/Space Test Center (MSTC) SSM  USSR, were occupied and that training was occurring in and near these facilities (Figure 1).

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2. (S/D) In mid-1979, there were several indications that both mobile facilities 1 and 2 were occupied by substantial numbers of troops. On  at mobile facility 1, eight separate troop formations and two buses were near the main entrance (Figure 2). Eight troop formations were seen again on  in the housing area. On  at mobile facility 2, five troop formations were in front of an 11-bay garage in the operations area, and vehicle tracks led to at least two and possibly five bays of the 11-bay garage (Figure 3). Although vehicle tracks were often observed around the multibay garages at both facilities, the  observation represents one of the best examples.

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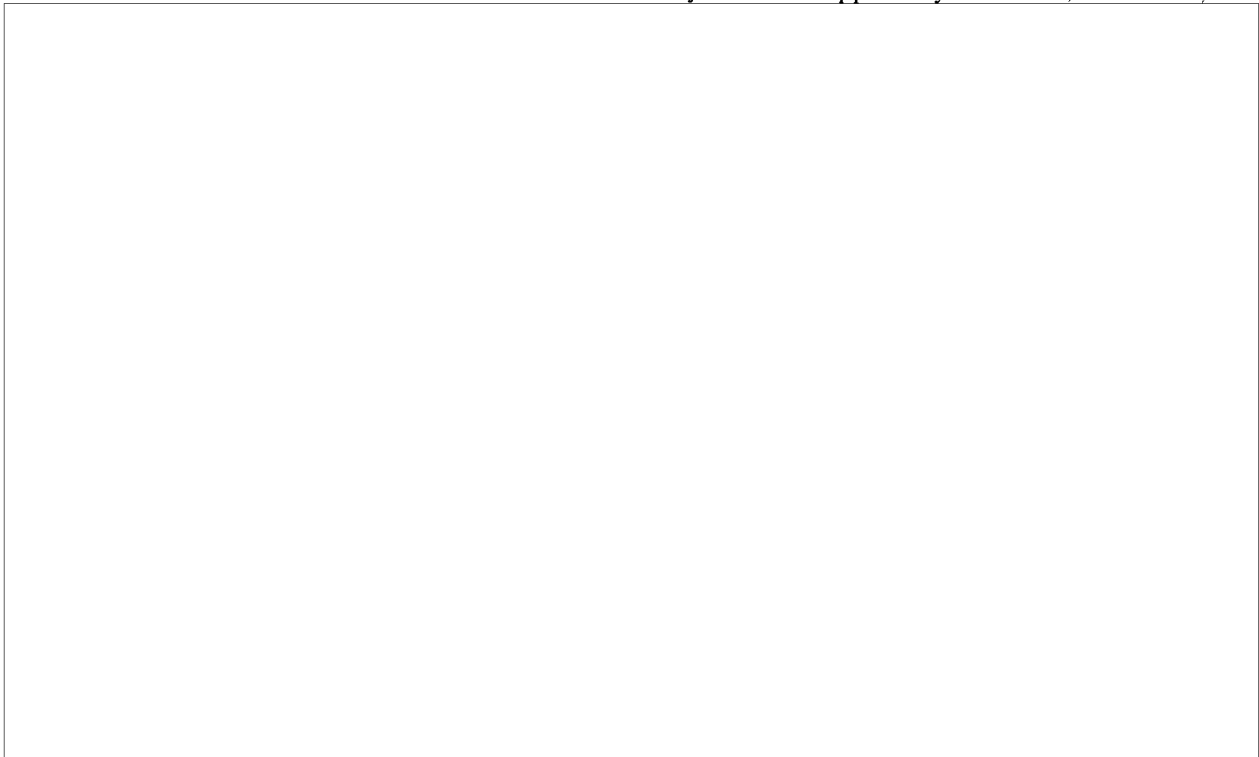
3. (TSR) Construction was started on two probable SS-16/-20 vehicle mockups between   in the operations area of mobile facility 2. The two probable mockup frameworks were aligned with an existing mockup of an SS-16/-20-associated  van truck (Figure 4) which was constructed in September 1978. Similar SS-16/-20 vehicle mockups have been constructed at SS-20 mobile bases and were probably used for training. Since support vehicles for both the SS-20 IRBM and the SS-16 ICBM mobile systems are apparently the same, it would not

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be unusual to see similar training with vehicle mockups at Plesetsk, where the SS-16 was tested from 1972 until early 1976.

4. (S/D) Probable upgrading of troop housing and support structures was underway at mobile facility 1. A new three-story barracks/administration building, one two-story barracks, and a probable new recreation building have been constructed. Since early 1980, seven older single-story barracks have been razed in the housing area. At mobile facility 2, existing barracks are multistory, and only a new messhall has been constructed recently.

5. (TSR) Between [] a rectangular framework covered with camouflage canvas/netting (Figure 5) was erected over a rail siding at the Plesetsk ICBM Rail-to-Road Transfer Point []. The structure is [] and was still present on []. A section of the rail was covered with earth at the southern end of the structure, probably to facilitate vehicle access for transloading operations. Similar canvas-covered structures have been erected at several SS-20-associated RTPs. The RTP at Plesetsk is approximately 6 kilometers (km) south of mobile facility 1 and was once used to support SS-7 propellant transloading.

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6. (TSR) In June 1979, a [] open-sided, drive-through wooden structure was under construction along the edge of a tree line 6 km east of mobile facility 2. The structure was completed by []. The open sides had been covered with sheets of canvas by []. [] the canvas sheeting had been staked on either side of the structure, giving it a tentlike appearance. The canvas cover has been maintained since the summer of 1979. The structure was still present when last seen on [].

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7. (TSR) On [] vehicle tracks led to and probably through the structure, indicating that it was being used (Figure 6). Similar vehicle tracks were also seen in the snow during March and April 1980. The only vehicle seen near the structure was a bus parked near the west end of the structure on []. This structure is across the road from a tree clearing where five canvas-covered SS-16 vehicles (Figure 6) were seen in July 1974. Although the purpose of this structure is not known, its presence near an area previously used for probable field training suggests that similar activity may be occurring.

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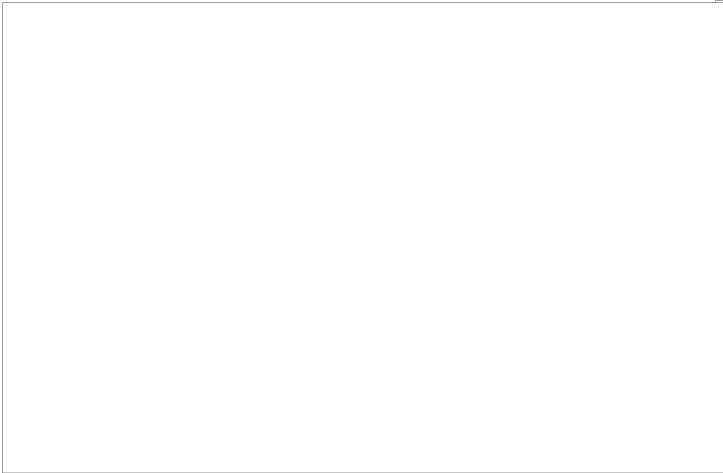
8. (TSR) As early as September 1977, a large sheet of camouflage canvas was observed lying on the pavement in the operations area of mobile facility 1. In October 1979, several sheets of canvas were spread on the pavement in front of the clerestory building at mobile facility 2. Although observations of this kind are not frequent, they indicate that mobile missile-associated vehicles are probably at these facilities.

IMAGERY ANALYST'S COMMENTS

9. (TSR) Historically, unprecedented concealment efforts were observed at Plesetsk during the SS-16 ICBM development program. The extensive use of canvas/netting to conceal activity and equipment was observed prior to and during the flight test program. Concealment and the apparent use of strict measures to deny overhead observation is apparently continuing. Since the end of the SS-16 flight test program in April 1976, construction has continued at facilities associated with the mobile missile program. This was evidenced by the construction of multibay garages, high-bay maintenance buildings, and possible warhead handling buildings.

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10. (TSR) Extensive coniferous forests cover large areas of the test range, a limiting factor which affords excellent areas for concealment of vehicles during daylight hours. Vehicle track activity and secondary roads lead into these forested areas around mobile facilities 1 and 2 and launch sites 5 and 6. Once vehicles enter the tree cover, their presence is almost impossible to detect. Another limiting factor which denies visual observation of vehicular activity is the long periods of cloud cover which are more prevalent in the Plesetsk area than at the Kapustin Yar and Tyuratam MSTCs. Because of these factors, the lack of ground support equipment and launch-related vehicle observations in or near these support facilities is not surprising.

11. (TSR) Although there was no direct evidence to suggest that mobile facilities 1 and 2 were being used as operational bases, it is possible that training or equipment reliability checkout for a mobile ICBM system is underway. To maintain readiness in terms of mobile crew training or to develop scenarios for future mobile ICBM systems would not be inconsistent with Soviet planning.

MAPS OR CHARTS

ACIC: US Air Target Chart, Series 200, Sheet FP0102-9HL, scale 1:200,000 (SECRET)

(S) Comments and queries regarding this report are welcome. They may be directed to [redacted] Soviet Strategic Forces Division, Imagery Exploitation Group, NPIC; [redacted]

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